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The Cut Flower QUARTERLY

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

for growers of field and greenhouse specialty cuts

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FROM the **PRESIDENT**

Polly Hutchison

The *dry* field.

Hello folks! Writing from misty, muddy Rhode Island here, with ten inches of rain the last two weeks. We lost a little to drowning, but largely the few drying days in between kept us just okay. Extreme weather is a great argument for building your organic matter, that's for sure. I hope your fields are okay as well, no matter what 2013 brings.

No matter the weather, this time of year brings change. Spring crops slide away, but it seems every week brings on a new perennial or three and the summer annuals are showing their sweet heads. Man, I love flower farming! This has been a great but especially crazy year for us, so here's a glimpse at our week, just for fun. These are in somewhat random order:

Sixty-five Mason jars and counting.

Scrubbed workroom counters and set up hard goods for six weddings.

Met with mother of bride and bride. Repeat.

Delivered a wedding with 73 quart mason jars (and more bottles for cocktail tables), then off to deliver the sparkly white city wedding in the midst of a huge Pride parade.

Cocktail. Repeat.

Harvested everything humanly possible before 4 inches of rain.

Tried to find things in the overpacked cooler.

Set up succulent planters, terrariums and favors for this week.

Planted seeds. Repeat.

Polly is uncertain whether margaritas and moustaches are truly compatible.

Met with Jill Rizzo of the new *The Flower Recipe Book* about a leading a design class here in August (if you want to know more, email me).

Wrote bridal proposal. Repeat.

Armloads of peonies.

Stared at my impossibly pretty passion flowers opening on the vine, mouth slightly agape.

Made a boutonniere for the grandpa who won't make it to his granddaughter's wedding next week because he passed away this week.

Harvested everything humanly possible for the weekend farmers' markets.

Set up the coffee vendor for this November's ASCFG meeting here in Lil' Rhody.

Weeded. Repeat.

I left out cleaning and cooking and vehicle repairs and chores and all the fun things that never quite make it on to or off of the "to do" list. How do we do all these sorts of things in June? Because we have the best jobs in the world. Flowers rule.

Plan your trip to Wooster Ohio or Saunderstown, Rhode Island now, before you get too tired.

Summer Photo Album: *Easy Ideas for Sustainable Floristry*

Ann Sensenbrenner
Farm To Vase, Madison, Wisconsin

When I took my first floral design classes, I was surprised by our almost exclusive use of out-of-season, imported flowers to learn techniques. But beyond the flowers themselves, I couldn't believe the chemicals, plastics, and utter waste involved. I remember going to a class one October, excited to think that we'd be working with kale and mums. Instead we stuck carnations and dyed preserved oak leaves into a block of floral foam which we had carved to fit into a hollow plastic pumpkin. Maybe I was under the influence of the floral adhesive fumes, but I believe that was the moment I decided I had to start my own eco-floristry business. We were talking about FLOWERS after all. How could this not be a natural, "green" industry? There had to be an alternative.

I knew that of all places, my city of Madison, Wisconsin would support an ecologically responsible florist. This progressive college town was called "30 square miles surrounded by reality" by Lee Dreyfus, future governor of Wisconsin, while campaigning in 1978. The phrase stuck, and we even have a newspaper now called 77 Square (reflecting our bigger size these days). We live here with peace, love, urban chickens, and bike paths that get snowplowed first, before the streets. The city will provide residents with not only trash and recycling bins, but also with rain barrels and compost bins. People here care about where our food is grown, that our lakes get cleaner, and that everyone has a voice.

We care most of all that the beautiful "unreal" life we've created here can be sustained for generations to come. I think we have the right idea here in Madison, and it seems like more and more folks in all sorts of cities are considering more closely what we all buy, use, and send back to the earth. You might be one of those people. Or...you might just like these ideas because they will save you money! Regardless of the purity of your motivation, I hope you enjoy looking through my sustainability photo album, and find an idea or two that you can use with your own flowers.

The Mason jar trend will surely wax and wane, but these used jars will always be in ample supply, and make attractive vessels for your flowers. Put the word out with friends and relatives, and you might be surprised how much is available and that people are happy to unload. I have a contact at a company that does decluttering/downsizing for seniors, and she is able to provide me with more jars and vases than I could ever use. I have scrubbed up recycled Starbucks Frappuccino bottles to use for events; with the labels off they look just like old milk bottles. (Dairy chic!) I posted a note on Facebook asking if anyone drank these regularly, and it turns out many people do, and they were happy to save them for me.

Check thrift stores and garage sales for containers and tins. I love to "Pot a vase." In other words, tuck a small vase or jar into a larger container filled in with a potted plant. Your buyer will appreciate flowers which can be planted outside and enjoyed even when the cut flowers are done. I have done this with potted herbs as well, and even included a recipe that uses that ingredient.

Plastic floral picks, I banish you! Use an iris pod or slice one end of a dogwood twig to hold an enclosure card. Bamboo is a sustainable wood, and I guarantee local restaurants have overstock chopsticks you can take. Just ask!

Another sustainable material: burlap. Marcia Terrones of Blue Plate Catering in Madison says "Burlap, barns, and Mason jars are the 'it thing' for weddings this season." Have you ever looked at Pinterest? Do a quick search for "burlap bridal" if you need convincing of this trend. I can get 10 free bags a month from a local coffee brewer, Ancora Coffee. They are huge bags (they held the beans!), often have cool text printed on them, and are the perfect look for many bouquets. I can fit 6 burlap-wrapped bouquets in my basket when I deliver by bike. When I want to use color to tie my bouquets, I use recycled ribbon made from silk saris. Some is torn from vintage saris, and some is byproduct of the sari production industry. Yes, it travels a long way to get to me (carbon footprint guilt), but I still think on an important level this is a sustainable material. When I use a silk sari ribbon that is a perfect match for my local delphiniums, it makes me pause a moment and consider our interconnectedness.

We have come to the issue of how to hold flowers in place. Can you imagine working without floral foam? One idea: At the hardware store buy ½" wire grid and cut out a disk that fits the inside of a Mason jar lid. I have found this especially useful for thicker stems like kale, as I can snip a bigger hole for it in the grid, and poke the wire nubs into the kale stem to keep it in place. I think a similar, although more delicate, lattice could be made from natural materials, like ribbon grass. Tangles of grape vines, chicken wire, rocks, and antique floral frogs can help stems stay in place at the bottom of a vessel.

But frankly, isn't this an over-blown issue? If stems are arranged cleverly in the right container, they will stay in place. They counterbalance and brace each other. Obviously, a hanging sphere of flowers is probably not possible, but more often than not there is a sustainable work-around. One of the best media for holding winter materials in place is...wait for it...DIRT. Winter event idea: try using potted rosemary plants, and infilling them with spruce and dried flowers. Use opaque containers like a tarnished tea set, and no one will know your dirty secret. For summer and fall events, try grapes or watermelon! Thread grapes onto wire, close crown with floral tape, and poke flowers into the north pole of each grape. For that special girl in your life, this crown couldn't be sweeter.

Additional resources:

Silk Sari Ribbon, helping to bring women in Nepal and India out of poverty: www.DarnGoodYarn.com

Great ideas and discussion threads: http://sustainablefloristry.wordpress.com/

Materials Safety Data Sheet for floral foam: www.fdionline.net/fdi/public/files/msds/SO-Oasis_Floral_Foam_2009.pdf

Facts about burlap: www.luftandco.com/burlap-green-eco-choice/

Leave it to Martha to create a hanging sphere with moss and succulents: www.marthastewart.com/918574/how-make-hanging-sphere

A site to help you stay on top of these rustic wedding trends. You might not even know that you are competing with "brooch bouquets." http://rusticweddingchic.com/

(model credit goes to my daughter, Laura Violet)

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Expand Your Growing Season into Winter in High Tunnels

Chris Wien

High tunnels used for cut flower growing in the North are often primarily season extenders, allowing three weeks of frost-free growing at both ends of the season. But that means no income until the early crops of stock, sweet peas and larkspur start flowering in the high tunnel in May and June. The realization that high tunnels could also be used to overwinter crops in the North for earlier spring harvests came to me more recently, encouraged by attending the 2012 ASCFG conference in Tacoma.

Ron Beck, bulb expert at Gloeckner, suggested that anemone and ranunculus could be tried as overwinter crops in high tunnels in our Zone 5-6 location. Accordingly, we soaked the corms in early December, and planted them in our cold high tunnel in mid-December. Hedging our bets, we covered half the plots with polyester low row cover, and left the other half uncovered. You can imagine my surprise when the first open anemone flowers appeared under the low cover plots at the end of March, after what could be considered a normally-cold winter! I was amazed and delighted.

The low tunnel covers advanced the start of flowering by about a week, and increased stem length one or two inches. Harvests continued until May 24.

As can be seen from the summary table, the anemone was more productive than the ranunculus, but three of the four varieties tested had similar stem length.

With a little work in December, we were able to use vacant space in the high tunnel to produce valuable and desirable flowers in April. That might not work in a mild winter, like the one in 2012, in which the plants might start growing too soon, and then get hurt by frost. Nevertheless, it is worth a try, especially with the secondary protection of the low tunnel.

	Stem length, in.		Stems per plant	
	No cover	Low cover	No cover	Low cover
Anemone				
Galilee Red	12.5	13.3	6.4	5.5
Meron Bordeaux	9.1	10.6	4.2	4.6
Ranunculus				
Labelle Champagne	13.4	15.3	3.6	3.6
Amadine Yellow Picotee	13.0	15.2	3.4	4.0

'Galilee Red' anemone, growing in the high tunnel. Wires supported the polyester row cover, removed in mid-April.

'Amadine Yellow Picotee' ranunculus

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Cotinus
smoketree, smokebush

John Dole and Lane Greer

Reprinted from *Woody Cut Stems for Growers and Florists*

Smoketree inflorescence.

Why you should grow it

Smoketree can be grown for its purple or green foliage or flower clusters. It is easy to grow, grows fast, and is virtually pest-free. *C. coggygria* grows well in the northern United States.

Why you shouldn't

Flowers are produced on two-year old wood, so a choice may have to be made between foliage and inflorescences. Some growers have reported that the cut stems have an odd smell and can be difficult to hydrate. The sap can cause allergic reactions.

Purple-leafed smoketree grown for cut foliage.

Species and Cultivars

Cotinus coggygria: Both purple and green leaf forms are grown for their foliage and inflorescences. In general, *C. coggygria* has showier inflorescences than *C. obovatus* (Tripp, 1994). The showy part of the inflorescence is actually the large cluster of peduncles as the flowers are small.

• Purple foliage cultivars bear dark pink or reddish-purple inflorescences. Cultivars include 'Black Velvet', 'Cooke's Purple', 'Nordine', 'Notcutt's Variety', 'Purple Supreme', 'Red Beauty', 'Royal Purple', and 'Velvet Cloak'. 'Nordine' is very cold hardy. 'Royal Purple' and 'Velvet Cloak' are readily available and generally have the best color that stays true in the dog days of summer. Tripp (1994) states that coppiced plants of 'Velvet Cloak' retain their color better than 'Royal Purple', while 'Royal Purple' has better foliage color if not coppiced.

• Green leaf types include 'Daydream', 'Green Fountain', 'Pink Champagne' and 'Young 'Lady'. Green-foliaged cultivars are grown primarily for their rose pink inflorescences, although green foliage is sometimes sold. 'Daydream' bears lots of long-lasting inflorescences that bloom later than the species form (Dirr, 1998). 'Pink Champagne' performs very well in the Southeast United States (Tripp, 1994). 'Young Lady' produces large inflorescences even when young (Dole, 2007).

• There is a yellow or gold leaf type known as Golden Spirit or 'Ancot'. It may be more susceptible to verticillium wilt than other types.

Cotinus coggygria 'Young Lady' inflorescence.

• ***Cotinus obovatus***, the American smoketree, grows slightly larger than *C. coggygria*. This species is harder to find than *C. coggygria*, blooms slightly earlier, and is better for higher pH soils (Dirr, 1998). *C. obovatus* is native to a few areas in the southeastern United States, primarily in limestone-rich soils. Plants are dioecious, with males producing showier flowers than females (Tripp, 1994).

• ***Cotinus* 'Grace'**, a hybrid of *C. coggygria* and *C. obovatus*, is a definite improvement over both its parents, with very large, 12 inch (30 cm) long flower panicles and dark purple leaves that hold up well. Spring Meadow Nursery lists it as *C. ×dummeri* after its developer Peter Dummer.

Production

General growth: Smoketree forms a small tree or large shrub, 10 to 15 feet (3 to 4.5 m) tall. Place in full sun for good color, particularly the purple-leaved forms. Plants are easy to grow but take a year or two to establish themselves. They have medium growth rates but grow faster when pruned annually. Both *C. coggygria* and *C. obovatus* are hardy in Zones 5 through 8, although purple forms are slightly less cold hardy.

Flowers mature in early summer. Although the individual flowers are small, they are borne in long panicles along with hairy growths. The entire inflorescence is about 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 cm) long and flowers during summer. In the North, bloom time lasts longer than in the South.

Cotinus is adaptable to most soils, although it seems to prefer well-drained, infertile soils. Verticillium wilt increases in overly wet soils.

Spacing: As little as 30 inches (75 cm) to as much as 6 feet (2 m), depending on pruning and harvesting expectations. If plants are cut to the ground every year, space them closer together. For flowers, space farther.

Pruning: Pruning depends on whether you are harvesting flowers or foliage. If pruning for foliage, best color is produced on new growth, so cut back hard in late winter/early spring, before new growth begins (Brown and Kirkham, 2004; Dean, 1997). Annual pruning also provides larger leaves with darker color but flowers are, of course, sacrificed. Plants respond well to hard pruning. Plants can also be pollarded.

Flowers are produced on 2-year-old wood. The entire plant can be cut to the ground every 2 years, or selectively harvested every year.

Pests and diseases: Most pests and diseases do not bother *Cotinus*, except for *Verticillium*, a root pathogen that is hard to get rid of. The disease is also called verticillium wilt, because infected plants often have droopy leaves that no amount of watering can cure. Verticillium wilt is not always fatal, but it is easily spread, so use care when harvesting. Healthy, adequately irrigated plants are less susceptible to the disease. High nitrogen levels and improper or very severe pruning can aggravate the situation. Smoketree is also susceptible to fireblight, which can be a problem in areas with large apple and pear orchards.

Harvest and Postharvest

Stage of harvest: For foliage, harvest after the stems have hardened off, which occurs in summer and continues through fall. Harvest 20 to 24 inch (50 to 60 cm) stems.

Expected yields: Flowers are produced on plants as young as 2 years old, depending on growth and cultivar. Plants can be lightly harvested after two years for foliage, or three years for flowers.

Conditioning: Stems of foliage can be hard to hydrate. Cut into hot water or a hydrator and place in a cooler overnight. Devecchi (2005) recommended placing foliage stems in a solution of silver nitrate (25 ppm), aluminum sulfate (50 ppm) and sugar (2.5%).

Storage and shipping: Store the foliage in water. Stems can be shipped dry.

Vase life: 7 to 12 days for foliage.

Propagation

Collect softwood cuttings in early to mid-summer and treat with 8000 ppm IBA (Dirr, 1998) or 10,000 ppm KIBA (Tripp, 1994) and keep under mist until roots appear. Dirr (1998) also recommends holding under 47% shade cloth. Cuttings are slow to establish roots.

Seed will not come true from either green or purple forms. Collect seed in fall, acid scarify for one hour, then plant outdoors (Tripp, 1994) or stratify for 3 months at 41ºF (5ºC).

Marketing

Harvest stems 2 to 3 feet (60 to 90 cm) long and place five stems in a bundle (Dean, 1997). In Italy cut stems with or without inflorescences are sold in 1 pound (0.5 kg) bunches (Unione Cooperativa Floricoltori della Riviera, 1997).

Some markets can use lots of purple-leaved foliages and others cannot. Flowers are becoming very popular and are scarce, so fine specimens command a good price.

Troubleshooting

Flowering: Inflorescences are somewhat wispy. 'Daydream', 'Young Lady' and 'Grace' have premium floral presentations. If growing *C. obovatus* for flowers, grow males.

Loss of purple color: This is typical in warm summer temperatures. 'Royal Purple' and 'Velvet Cloak' are thought to have the best color, but even these cultivars will not retain their color in the heat and humidity of the southeastern United States.

Landscape Plantings

Smoketree makes an attractive shrubby tree and is underused in most of the United States. They flower in early summer, helping to fill the gap between late spring bloomers such as lilac and summer shrubs such as hydrangea.

Green leaf forms are most useful for their flowers, but purple and gold-leaved forms have much longer displays. Use the purple and gold forms beside each other for a knockout combination, or mix them with other purple and gold shrubs such as Himalayan honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa* 'Golden Lanterns'), red-leaved rose (*Rosa glauca*), dwarf or weeping redleaf Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*), or ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Diabolo' or 'Dart's Gold').

The flowers of American smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*) are not as showy, but plants are unrivalled for their incredibly beautiful fall foliage, in shades of yellow, orange, and crimson.

Smoketree is easy to grow in well-drained soil and full sun. Unpruned plants grow 10 or 15 feet (3 to 4.5 m) tall and wide. Pruned shrubs produce long, straight stems in a few months. In the purple cultivars, annually pruned stems have better colored leaves.

Smoketree can be used in groups, but a single dark-leaved specimen is enough to make a statement in a border or informal hedge.

Uses

Foliage makes an excellent filler, with the purple forms particularly useful in fall arrangements, combined with maroon and gold shades. The pink or pinkish-purple inflorescences are large and airy and can be used as line, form or filler. The inflorescences are also used dried.

Other Comments

Maryland grower Mel Heath removed his 'Velvet Cloak' plants because they became less productive as they aged. He noted that this cultivar produced longer but fewer stems than 'Grace' and 'Young Lady'.

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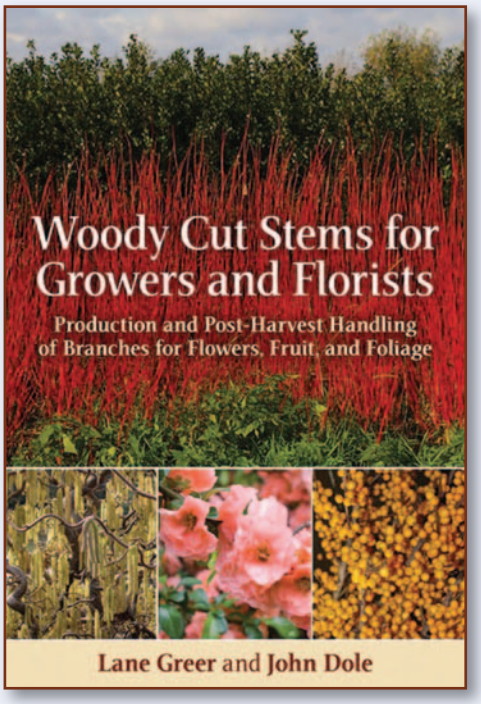
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Honeybees: Keystone Species Essential to Agriculture

Gay Smith

The secret to vibrant business travel is looking for local treasures. A recent detour for me was a visit to the Worcester (Massachusetts) Art Museum to explore an exhibit called "Kennedy to Kent State: Images of a Generation". Iconic photographs of Marilyn Monroe, JFK's assassination, Vietnam protests, and videos of MLK Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech and the 1969 moon landing triggered abundant memories of my youth. Ambling through the galleries in a nostalgic fog, I became engaged in conversation with a museum employee, which somehow segued into beekeeping. His passionate description intrigued me to dig deeper and, although no honeybee boxes grace my backyard (yet), here are a few details I discovered about these incredible insects.

Workin' for a Livin'

Humans have raided bees' nests throughout history to enjoy the benefits of honey, including culinary use, medicinal and cosmetic properties, beeswax, and as a component of wine (mead). Smoking pots and bee paraphernalia discovered in archeological sites indicate that bees and honey were valuable goods in the commerce of ancient Greece, Egypt and China; jars of honey were found in King Tut's tomb.

Fast forward to the 18th century where the science of microscopy allowed European natural philosophers to understand the finer details of natural phenomena including bee culture. Curiosity and improved scientific tools fueled investigation about the insects' physiology and colony hierarchy. Inquisitive minds focused on the specialized duties of sterile workers (females) and drones (males). One scientist, known as the father of modern bee science, Francis Huber, is credited with cracking the mystery of how queen bees become fertilized (in the air!). When colonies become crowded, new queens and males are produced and the group swarms to a new site. During the swarm, one of these new queens breaks away to join the mile high club by mating with a number of drones. More of a job than a pleasurable experience, drones suffer the loss of their genitalia in the process, and ultimately death. The now-impregnated queen flies back to the old nest to lay eggs, and although she may eventually leave again to swarm, she never mates again.

> "If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, man would have only four years left to live."
> ~ Albert Einstein

Closer understanding of bee colony structure led naturalists to start devising sustainable beekeeping methods rather than the traditional practice of total nest destruction and death of bees to harvest honey. Hive construction (artificial nests) included building frames with parallel bars arranged close enough for bees to attach combs and deposit nectar, pollen, and honey, but with enough distance between for "bee space", allowing healthy hives to flourish and bees to overwinter.

Fish Gotta Swim, Birds Gotta Fly

Bees gotta pollinate! Every garden needs pollinators and bees rank right at the top. Without them, the harvest of flowers, fruits and vegetables would be limited. Bees are efficient; one colony can visit 50,000 blossoms in a single day searching for nectar and pollen. Nectar, loaded with sugars, is their main source of energy. Pollen (aka bee bread) provides a balanced diet of proteins and fats. Communicating food sites is a fascinating aspect of colony behavior. Dances are performed by a worker bee on the return after discovering an abundant site of flowers as means to recruit help from fellow workers.

The late zoologist Karl von Frisch and his University of Munich students identified and named the specific dance movements used by foragers to signal two things to sister bees: distance and direction to a verdant food source. Dance steps indicating the distance to the booty are straight-forward and identified as "round, sickle or waggle runs". Directional indications, on the other hand, are according to the sun's position (not compass directions) so they change with time of day and geographical location. Some skeptical scientists agree that bee communications via dance movements happens, but that floral odors on the forager's body are the primary source of recruitment.

Both camps agree that foragers exhibit specific dances on the surface of the honeycomb to recruit help in gathering pollen and nectar.

Unfortunately, the process of flower hybridization to enhance traits favorable to commercial flower production (disease resistance, productivity, flower size and color) often results in pollen-less blooms and reduced nectar production, even sterile plants. Traits that improve blooms for commercial use often render them useless to pollinators like bees and butterflies. Still, there are many species that are especially good at attracting pollinators. This list of native and garden plants is a combination of lists from two Portland garden centers and a handout produced by Matthew Shepherd, Pollinator Conservation Program, Xerces Society, April 2004. (See side bar)

Honeybees in Trouble

Finally, a few details on colony collapse disorder (CCD). Bee pollination (and lack of it) affects agriculture to the tune of $7 to $16 billion. Beekeepers started noticing CCD as early as 2004, but the dots were not "officially" connected until 2006 when CCD was recognized as more than isolated incidences of bee demise. Colonies normally decrease by 10-15% in a year, but since CCD has been recognized, mortality rates are as high as 33%. Entomologists agree the causes of CCD are multiple. Crop monoculture production methods requires transporting hives to various growing areas and transit stress increases disease susceptibility.

Causes include *Varroa destructor,* a parasitic mite, several viruses, and a bacterial disease called European foulbrood. Environmentalists point to the use of insecticides containing neonicotinoids as the major culprit. This chemical acts as a systemic in plants and has many applications, depending on the crop: seed treatment, foliar spray or plant drench. Christian Krupke, an entomologist at Purdue University, discovered super-high levels of neonicotinoid in the talc used to keep seed-planting machines running smoothly. During corn seeding, resulting dust covers dandelions and weeds in the area on which bees feed. An online publication with useful information about toxicity and ways to protect bees from pesticides is called "How to Reduce Bee Poisoning from Pesticides" http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/pnw/pnw591.pdf

Honeybees are not only fascinating insects, their role in food production is unparalleled. Habitat loss, pesticide use, ubiquitous monoculture, and diseases all contribute to declining numbers, but nationwide efforts are in place to reverse waning populations. Hives are located in unconventional locations across the country. Minnesota, for example, has hives on the green roof of the Minneapolis City Hall, tucked between the honeysuckle and prairie flowers. Bob Redmond, a Washington State beekeeper, recently received permission to raise genetically healthy bees in the meadows around Sea-Tac airport. Planting diversity is one of the most critical steps to sustaining healthy honeybee colonies because it forces bees to move miles foraging rather than acres in their search of pollen. Backyard habitat certification programs and community gardens help revive healthy colonies and develop an awareness of the importance of pollinators, but CCD is still occurring, with the onus pointing to the use of pesticides containing neonictinoids.

Europe has banned pesticides with chemicals that are suspect. Euro pesticide policy is "guilty until proven innocent". Our federal government takes the opposite approach. Congress is waiting to see the effect of the Euro ban before risking the wrath (and financial support) of the powerful chemical industry. Until then, sprays with neonicotinoids as the active ingredient are allowed regardless that they are the number one suspect killing our hardworking, six-legged, unpaid farmworkers.

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Pollen and Nectar Sources

- Aster
  (annual and perennial varieties)
- Basil *Ocimum*
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia)*
- Caltrop *(Kallstroemia)*
- Cornflower
  Centaurea *(cyanus, C. imperialis)*
- Creosote bush (*Larrea)*
- Cotoneaster *(Cotoneaster)*
- Currant *(Ribes)*
- Elder *(Sambucus)*
- English lavender *(Lavandula)*
- Giant hyssop *(Agastache)*
- Globe thistle *(Echinops)*
- Goldenrod *(Solidago)*
- Huckleberry *(Vaccinium)*
- Hyssop *(Hyssopus)*
- Joe-pye weed *(Eupatorium)*
- Lupine *(Lupinus)*
- Marjoram *(Origanum)*
- Mint *(Mentha)*
- Oregon grape *(Berberis)*
- Penstemon *(Penstemon)*
- Poppy *(Papaver)*
- Purple coneflower *(Echinacea)*
- Rabbit-brush *(Chrysothamnus)*
- Rhododendron *(Rhododendron)*
- Rosemary *(Rosmarinus)*
- Sage *(Salvia)*
- Scorpion-weed *(Phacelia)*
- Snowberry *(Symphoricarpos)*
- Stonecrop *(Sedum)*
- Sunflower *(Helianthus)*
- Thyme *(Thymus)*
- Wallflower *(Erysimum)*
- Wild buckwheat *(Eriogonum)*
- Wild lilac *(Ceanothus)*
- Willow *(Salix)*
- Zinnia *(Zinnia)*

Stink Bug Activity Can be Monitored

Stanton Gill

Already taken firm root in several eastern states, the brown marmorated stink bug is making steady progress across the rest of the country. It has managed to spread to 39 states, Washington, D.C., and into Canada.

Here in Maryland, populations dropped a bit in 2012, but after overwintering in barns and houses, the pests are again swarming the general landscape. Several cut flower growers opened their market tents to find hundreds of BMSB hiding in the canopies. It certainly does nothing for your market debut when you open your tent and bugs rain out of it.

What concerns us is that the brown marmorated stink bug has such a broad potential host plant range. It has been observed on many diverse plant species, both woody and herbaceous, including tropical ornamentals.

Trees, shrubs, and ornamental plants near their overwintering shelters often serve as the best places to observe early indications. As adult activity increases throughout June and as mating, egg laying, and nymphal development occur throughout the summer, BMSB can be found on a range of plant species. Cut flower growers often harvest plants with berries and pods and often the BMSB will be found feeding on these plants.

Last summer we spent time wandering about commercial cut flower growers' fields looking for BMSB on their cut flowers. The good news is BMSB appears somewhat selective and prefer to feed on a just a couple of major cut flower species. If you are growing nandina and other berry-producing cut woody stems expect to find BMSB feeding on the fruit. Injury to edible fruit is significant, but damage to ornamental fruits may be more limited.

In 2012, Dave Dowling helped us focus on one particular plant – amaranth. He reported BMSB were all over the flowers in large numbers. We observed nymphs and adult in mid-August, with the majority feeding on the flowers. The damage was really not detectable last year but we can say that this plant is highly attractive to the nymphs and adults. This plant appears to be a good trap plant for this pest and you might consider growing it just so you will know when they are active in your local area.

The interesting thing is 'Limelight' hydrangeas were being grown in an adjacent planting; we found adult BMSB on its foliage, but not feeding on it. This year, there will be no amaranth near the hydrangea, so we'll get the chance to determine whether the BMSB can be a pest on hydrangea.

This year Dave planted a row of amaranth in a new location. We'll monitor it summer through fall to see if adults lay egg masses on the plants, and if we detect nymphs and adults feeding. We'll also monitor sunflowers and zinnias on a weekly basis, since we observed both nymphs and adults feeding on those flowers last year.

In the case of sunflowers the BMSB were feeding on the flower head and ray petals. If the flower was left on the plant to fully open, the feeding caused a spotting of the ray petals. Since sunflowers are harvested as the petals unfold, there may not be enough time for feeding damage to become visible before the flower is sold.

Damage to zinnias was minimal, as flowers were harvested twice a week.

The most popular cut flower plant we found BMSB moving about the foliage on was dahlias. The nymphs and adults were feeding on the flower heads and some were found on the foliage, but none was observed feeding on the leaves. We'll monitor these this year as well, to see if egg laying occurs on the plants and whether nymphs and adults are damaging this crop.

The good news is that we are finding more birds feeding on brown marmorated stink bugs, and local parasitoids are starting to adapt this invader as a food pest, including native wasps. This is reason for optimism!

Regional extension personnel are working with us to monitor BMSB in herbaceous perennial nurseries: Brian Kunkel in Delaware and Pennsylvania, Ginny Rosenkranz on Maryland's eastern shore, and Debby Smith-Fiola in western Maryland. We'll be busy updating all growers on the progress of this important horticultural pest.

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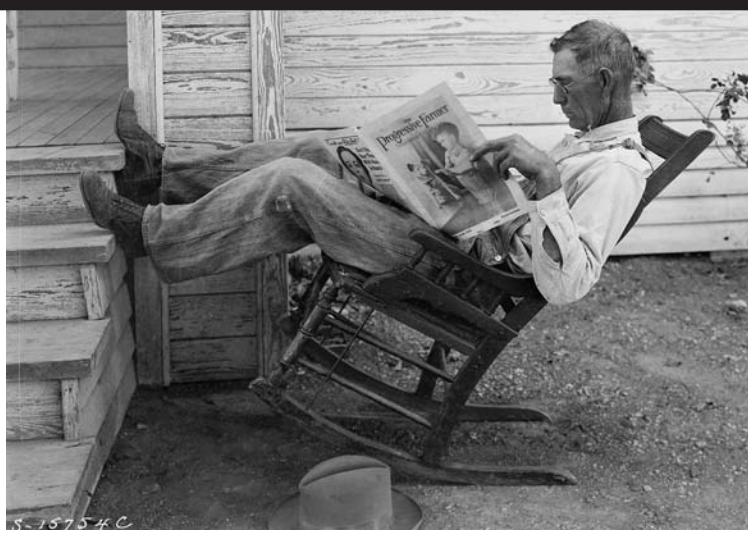
A Farmer's Summer Reading List

Frank Gasperini
National Council of Agricultural Employers



About this time each year, our local newspaper will feature an article called something like "2013 Summer Reading," "2013 Vacation Reading," or possibly even "2013 Beach Reading." The topic will be which new "potboilers" the author recommends we read this year while vacationing, broken down into categories for romance, non-fiction, politics, history, young adult, etc.

Of course, it never occurs to these writers that while they, and millions of other Americans, head to the beach for two weeks, those of you who feed us are heading into your busiest time of the year. For you, rereading *Gone with the Wind* or *War and Peace* or even reading the newest agricultural mystery novel published by your Uncle Joe will just have to wait. With that in mind, let me propose some "Summer Agricultural Employer Reading" lists, broken down by category.

Safety and compliance reading. This is a huge and growing reading list for all of us, particularly for growers. Yes, you must read all the labels and follow the directions of the pesticide and plant nutrient products you plan to use, even if you've read them before. Not only is it the law for all registered control products, but the formulations, uses, cautions and potential interactions may change from year to year for pesticide or nutrient products. Being able to say you thoroughly read, understood and followed the directions is important to the well-being of your crops, your workers, yourself, your consumers and the future availability of these products to the entire industry.

If you have added new equipment, or new uses for existing equipment, it is important to read, understand and communicate all of the directions and safety instructions before putting that equipment to work. It is important, and in many instances a matter of legal responsibility, to reread and properly communicate all the pertinent safety rules, regulations and on-farm policies and expectations to everyone involved. The first 105F day is not the best time to start to plan what your heat illness policy might be.

Legal and personnel reading. Review your state labor laws for any changes in agricultural employer responsibilities, training or communication requirements or mandatory reporting requirements, and reconfirm minimum wages to assure you are in complete compliance. I recently attended a presentation by one of our leading agricultural labor attorneys, titled "a stitch in time---." He used that old saying to illustrate how employers have saved tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars by paying better attention to details and changes than others did. Read it now and save.

Influencing and securing the future reading, writing and political action. High on this summer's "must read" lists are the federal legislative proposals that we all hope will brighten the future of labor-intensive domestic agriculture by assuring more reliable and predictable access to willing, able and legally eligible workers when and where you need them. On the table as of this writing is U.S. Senate Bill 744. At 844 pages, it rivals some of the longer novels that our non-farm friends may read over the summer, and although it may be less fun to read than a well-written mystery novel, it will certainly have a longer-lasting impact on all of our lives than any novel we might read.

By the time you read this, we hope there will be a House bill that will parallel the Senate version, and that we will be well on the way to having a conclusion to the long, drawn-out, on-again, off-again saga of immigration reform that addresses agricultural labor needs.

We must all work together to assure that meaningful progress is made on these issues this year. Because of the upcoming election cycles, if it doesn't happen this year, it may be another five to 10 years before we have another opportunity like this.

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Megan Bame

Influences on Vase Life of Red Boronia

Boronia heterophylla, commonly called red boronia, is grown for cut flower production in Australia, Israel, New Zealand, and the United States, however, there is little published information about its vase life. This study evaluates commonly-used vase solution additives and the influence of bacterial numbers in the vase solutions and stem segments.

Two stages of maturity were evaluated: late harvest, indicated by incipient petal closure and fading below the calyx, and normal harvest maturity, characterized by open, bright pink petals. The nine vase solution treatments were as follows:

1) 8-HQC (250mg/L)
2) Distilled water control
3) Acidified distilled water
4) Citric acid (10 mM)
5) Citric acid (10 mM)+ sucrose
6) Citric acid + chlorine (SDIC, 50mg/L)
7) Citric acid (10 mM)+ sucrose + chlorine
8) STS pulse (0.5 mM for 10.5 hours), then into distilled water
9) Citric acid (1.43 mM)

Vase life was ended when more than 50% of the flowers on the leafy racemose inflorescence exhibited wilting. The evaluation room was held at 20C and 58-65% relative humidity with 12-hour light cycles. Bacterial presence in the vase water and the plant stems was also measured.

The STS pulse resulted in an average vase life of 12.9 days. The next longest vase life was citric acid (1.43 mM) at 9.6 days. Treatments that included chlorine had the shortest vase life, only 4 days. The control, with distilled water only, had a vase life of 6.3 days. Considering all treatment variables, this study indicated that inhibiting the effects of ethylene was a more important factor than reducing bacterial counts in increasing vase life.

Williamson, V.G., D.C. Joyce, 2013. Boronia heterophylla *vase life is influenced more by ethylene than by bacterial numbers or vase solution pH.* Postharvest Biology and Technology, 84:28-35.

Delay Regreening in Cut Calla Lily

The leaf-like spathe of *Zantedeschia* (calla lily) regreens approximately two days after it fully opens, therefore being a limiting factor for the flowers' postharvest quality. This research evaluated the application of plant hormone solutions as a short-term pulse or a continuous vase solution in hopes of postponing the regreening of the spathe tissue.

Zantedeschia 'Best Gold' flowers were used in this experiment. Discs of spathe tissue, obtained using a cork borer, were used in preliminary trials to evaluate various concentrations of synthetic plant hormones including BAP (cytokinin), Zeatin, CPPU and GA3 (gibberellin). Combinations of BAP and GA3 were applied to whole stems as a pulse treatment or a continuous vase solution.

The preliminary trial indicated that regreening of spathe tissue treated with a simultaneous application of BAP and GA3 was postponed by up to five days longer than treatments of BAP and GA3 applied alone. The vase solution study found that application of BAP and GA3 as a 24-hour pulse was equally effective as a continuous vase solution in delaying regreening. This delay allows for a seven day extension of the vase life of *Zantedeschia* 'Best Gold'.

Chen, J., K.A. Funnell, D.H. Lewis, J.R. Eason, and D.J. Woolley. 2013. Cytokinin and gibberellin delay regreening of spathe tissue of Zantedeschia *'Best Gold'.* Postharvest Biology and Technology 84(61-65).

Floral Preservatives and Consumer Perception

Despite extensive evidence that floral preservatives extend postharvest longevity in most fresh flowers, the use of these preservatives among traditional florists varies. This study aimed to determine if the presence of floral preservatives or if the knowledge gained about the function and effectiveness of floral preservatives increased consumers' perception of quality, purchase intention and price of a floral arrangement.

A survey was used to evaluate the aspects of this study. The survey included four figures: 1) a photo of a floral arrangement, 2) the same photo with an unlabeled packed of preservative propped against the vase, 3) a photo of the same arrangement with a second, close-up photo of the clearly labeled packet of preservative and 4) the same photo sequence as figure 3 with an additional 191-word message describing the three functions of floral preservatives. For each figure, the survey participants were asked to rate the quality of the floral arrangement, indicate whether they would purchase the arrangement and what price they would say the arrangement is worth. Additional questions about floral preservatives were asked on the latter figures.

The survey data indicated that as consumers become more knowledgeable about floral preservatives, they attribute higher quality to floral arrangements with preservatives, are willing to pay more for arrangements with preservatives, and their purchase intention frequency increases. Though many participants did not appreciate the benefits of floral preservatives before reading the message about their function and effectiveness, providing that message increases the consumers' appreciation of the role of preservatives on quality and value of floral products. The overarching conclusion of the study was that florists should always use preservatives in their processing of fresh floral arrangements, consider providing a message about the function and effectiveness of floral preservatives and market the fact that preservatives are being used.

Jenkins, M.M., K.A. Williams and L.A. Brannon. 2013. Increased Knowledge about Floral Preservatives Influences Consumers' Perception of the Quality and Value of a Floral Arrangement Purchase, HortTechnology, 23(2) pp 142-148.

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GROWER **PROFILE**

Jane Henderson, Commonwealth Farms, Concord North Carolina

In early June, when many cut flower growers were working the longest days, Jane Henderson, owner of Commonwealth Farms in Concord, North Carolina, was putting in long days as well. But Jane wasn't in the field. In fact, she wasn't even in the state. Jane was enjoying a intensive, four-day floral design mini-course at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. This demonstrates two points: 1. She has help, good help, and 2. She's more than a grower; floral presentation is a major component of her business.

Commonwealth Farms has about an acre and a half in production, including two hoophouses. Of that, Jane cultivates a half-acre cutting garden at her mother's house, which is about six miles from the farm. Though Jane got her feet wet more than 30 years ago assisting the woman who did her wedding flowers, only in 2009 did she and her husband purchase a farm property that allowed her to establish a more steady business. The farm produces cut flowers, herbs and specialty produce using organic and sustainable practices. Prior to having actual flower fields, Jane would cut floral material from the yards of family and friends or purchase wholesale flowers to supplement arrangements.

Cooperation Leads to Independence

Jane also helped develop the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm, as a Resource Gardener when it was established. She grew a small demonstration plot, but was not considered a farmer-in-training. The Incubator concept allows selected participants to use plots of land and common equipment without making a capital investment while they establish their business. Participants take agricultural and business courses as part of the program, with the ultimate goal being able to go out on their own with an established customer base and a couple years of invaluable growing experience under their belts. She still works cooperatively with some of the participating farmers there and is excited that a current participant is working toward her own cut flower business, which has resulted in a dedicated cut flower cooler at the Incubator Farm.

Though she admits that *The Cut Flower Quarterly* often gets set aside, she says, "I could not have come this far without the ASCFG Bulletin Board." She also participated in a Cut Flower Mentor Program sponsored by Chatham County Cooperative Extension's Debbie Roos, and supported by NCA&T's Farmer to Farmer Mentoring Program in 2006. "I am deeply grateful to Cathy Jones of Perry-winkle Farm (a fellow ASCFG member in my hardiness zone!) for her generous mentorship," says Jane. "It was through this 8-week program that I learned of resources such as the ASCFG." One of her goals as a cut flower farmer is to help strengthen and expand the quantity and quality of cut flowers being grown locally by constantly sharing this information with aspiring farmers—even those who've never considered growing flowers—in the hope that they might add flowers to their crop rotation plans and increase the availability of locally grown floral material, a demand that's currently unmet.

In addition to being a champion of the Slow Flower movement in her region, Jane is recognized for her artistic arrangements, including unusual floral material used in creative ways. "Our flower arrangements are comparable to handicrafts such as hand-knit sweaters, blown glass and handmade pottery," she says. Having studied studio art in college, Jane obviously has an inherent talent that she nurtures through continuing education, like the course at Longwood Gardens, most recently.

She says leaving would not have been possible without her "fantastic Flower Team," four employees who collectively contribute around 70 hours a week. In addition, her husband contributes his civil

engineering and construction skills to infrastructure projects, and makes occasional deliveries on his way to work in Charlotte, and her mother makes deliveries, harvests flowers and offers her home as a space for floral design workshops.

Bringing the Bride to the Farm

Workshops are a new addition to Jane's business model. Her first workshop was for a bridal party—an idea she adapted from something she read on the Bulletin Board. The bride and her five bridesmaids met at Jane's mother's home. Jane walked them around the garden talking briefly about the types of flowers and foliage they might use and sharing basic cut flower knowledge. Jane built a demonstration arrangement discussing the creative process along the way. The bridal party sipped lemonade, nibbled snacks and enjoyed a pleasant summer evening on the wide porch amidst the flower arranging task at hand. The bride even commented, "This is the most relaxed I've been in at least seven days."

Her more established markets include year-round sales through subscriptions, special orders (including up to three weddings a month), and several local farmers' markets. To differentiate her flowers from the competition, Jane knew she wanted to grow the "most oddball flowers" she could find. She says, "One of my biggest challenges is knowing when enough is enough. I want to grow a wide variety of uncommon floral material, so I often order too many seeds or bulbs and have trouble finding places for them all when they need to be planted." To that end she's trying to master the art of scheduling for maximum productivity and succession of blooms.

She grows unique and long-lasting floral material, including a wide range of familiar and less common native and non-native perennials, shrubs, trees, and herbs, as well as annual flowers and bulbs. As a rule of thumb, she wants to use only flowers that have a vase life of at least seven days. This strategy has led to customer comments such as, "I don't need to buy flowers this week, because last week's bouquet is still pretty!" A few mainstays are lisianthus, ranunculus, French tulips, cress, euphorbia, and herbs such as oregano, catmint and parsley flowers, along with peonies, dahlias, heirloom roses, pineapple lilies, alliums, hellebores, (including colors and doubles), beautyberry, hydrangeas, coneflowers, vines, berries, bog and water plants. Vegetables are also included in her specialty floral designs from time to time.

Jane has observed, "Some people may experience sticker shock when looking at my understated bouquets at market, but I am now known for my long-lasting, high quality, unique flowers that mature over the course of a week or more, getting better over time!" She's identified her ideal customer as one who, "appreciates the cycles of nature, celebrating the garden's daily surprises—whether ephemeral, everlasting or somewhere in between."

Rather than growing Commonwealth Farms any larger, Jane hopes to empower people in her community to grow their own cut flowers, sharing her holistic approach to growing, which includes doing much of the work, including pest control, by hand or with hand tools. "This way," she says, "we can focus on particular imbalances and treat the farm as part of a larger ecosystem."

A bridal party visits Jane Henderson's flower farm.

Reflecting on her own growth as a farmer and the growth of Commonwealth Farms' reputation for sustainable production and quality product, Jane says, "I never really thought that what I do is special or unusual, but I am hearing it so often from people now that I feel more appreciated, honored and affirmed each week as more people become aware of the specialness of Nature's daily offerings."

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NORTHEAST

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Dawn and dusk are beautiful times to be at the farm. Things are peaceful and even through the recent abnormal heat wave, there tends to be a strand of cool air here and there, and a little bit of dew collects on my shoes and ankles.

Another special part of being outside during those crepuscular times, is the chance of seeing bats. I think of bats as our "night crew." They excel at pest management, which benefits us (fewer mosquitoes) and our crops (fewer crop pests). Quiet little volunteers.

Bats are as much a superhero as Batman, but without the $250 million production costs, multiplex surround sound, jumbo GMO popcorn or bladder-challenging soda. To me, their fantastic flying ability, excellent prey capture skills, incomprehensible sonar location ability, and quiet, mysterious life is far more exciting than anyone's cinematic creation.

Little brown bat with white nose syndrome

Unfortunately, little brown bats are challenged by a fungal disease called white nose syndrome that has spread through their population and is causing tremendous decline (some reports are up to 90% mortality for our Northeast population of little brown bats). Besides natural ecosystem disruption, this could significantly affect agriculture over the next few years, as bats play a huge influence on insect pest management, decreasing the need for quantities of pest control. Sadly, WNS is fatal.

Please report any dead bats, any bats you see out during the middle of the day or behaving abnormally to your area Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. If you see a live bat, feel thankful, and wish it wellness! They are amazing little winged mammals, and they are doing a significant amount of pest management work for you!

To encourage bats to reside at your farm, build a few bat boxes. They are easy to make and a great project for a helper of any age. Here are a few specs to keep in mind:

- Bat box plans are available for free online through National Wildlife Federation (nwf.org), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (fws.gov), and Bat Conservation (batcon.org).
- Make the box tight and narrow.
- Place in full sun (for growers in the Northeast, North-Central, Northwest and Rockies). The rest of the U.S., besides southern Arizona and central and southern Texas, should put their bat boxes in medium shade. Southern Arizona and central and southern Texas should put their bat boxes in full shade and paint the boxes with a light color.
- Mounting one box on the north side of the pole, and one on the south side of the pole is the best.
- Put on a post 12-15 feet off the ground (to keep predators out). Boxes mounted in trees tend not to work.
- Use water-based paints (or none at all).
- Do not put near bright lights.

Register now for the Growers' School in November! It will be a great way to celebrate the year with ASCFG friends, learn from the best of the best (REALLY! The Best of the BEST!) and prepare for your farm's future. A strong and profitable 2014 begins in November, at the ASCFG Grower's Business School. See you there!

Wishing you all a great growing season—and lots of bat-helpers too!

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The Elusive Rose

At the time I am writing this, my roses are in full bloom and on my mind in a big way. As I've expressed several times before, my David Austins continue to impress. I am finally 100% thrilled that I went with this fragile event flower over the more versatile hybrid teas. When I invested in the 110 plants I have, several growers that I talked to were surprised at my choice as the Austins are known to be a short-lived cut flower. But I loved them and wanted to go for it, so I did. The plants continue to thrive in their third year with little more care than any other flowers I grow. Pruning and horticultural oil seem to keep disease at bay and aside from the Japanese beetles that have their way with the plants for a few weeks in June the plants are pretty carefree. Blossoms are stunning; they never get old and each has its positive attributes.

'Orange Pompon'

The Kordes roses I received from Gloeckner, as a trial for last year's Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting at my farm, are also flowering now. So far, they are not any less impressive than the Austins. 'Orange Pompon' blooms in a spray of really large buds and one stem can be as big as a dinner plate dahlia when all flowers open. So far it is the best producer with thick long stems and plenty of them. 'Yellow Shake' has pretty flowers that are buttercup yellow streaked with peachy-orange. 'Old Fashioned Pompon' is a cerise red spray with small cabbage-shaped roses that seems to not open quite fully for me. 'Sweet Antique' is also very impressive with light pink old-fashioned garden rose blooms.

Mutant 'Terra Pompon'

In their second year after planting small 4" pots, the plants look good. However, I have what is supposed to be 'Terra Pompon'—a terra-cotta colored spray—blooming with not-fully-double, pale pink blooms that cover the top of a stem, resembling a cherry blossom branch in full bloom. I'm torn between being disappointed (terra-cotta is a great, unique color and what the heck is going on?!) and thrilled (that baby soft pillow of blooms is gorgeous!). I noticed that several were sprouting from the root stock, so I assume this is the problem. I checked with a few other growers, as a few had shared with me their trepidation regarding my Kordes trial at last year's Regional Meeting. Both Andrea Gagnon of Lynnvale Farms and Bob Wollam of Wollam Gardens were in attendance and told of little success in their own Kordes trials. I contacted them for updates and...

Andrea said:
"Year 1 (after bare root planting): short and promising, 10-15 plants came in not true to variety, some sort of wild type, didn't cut, planted in black plastic, drought year.
Year 2: shorter stems harvested, deer candy, plants looked fine except for unnamed variety which Alicain Carlson told me had distorting disease that could only come in from breeder.
Year 3: lost all product as ALL Kordes named varieties began sprouting from root stock.
Year 4: ripped OUT!
Waste of money, etc. wish I had planted heirlooms.

The twisty contorted disease spread among the unnamed variety but did not appear to go to others, never got the chance to tell as all were sprouting (or NOT at all) from rootstock."

Bob said:
"The Kordes roses were an expensive and disappointing experience on my farm. I can't point to one specific thing that caused them to be unproductive and not up to the beautiful standard that we saw in the Northwest. Mine are still living. They did not die and I don't believe they ever developed a disease. They bloomed beautifully the first spring from the quite robust bare root plants we bought, but even that fall they didn't give the nice flush I expected. I pruned them the next winter and they came back again in the spring with less vigor. It was downhill from there. Last fall, after 4 years we mowed them down, but they are

back again—no better. I'd guess our hot humid weather is to blame, but I don't know anyone on the East Coast who's successfully grown them. I've tested many plants over the years and had a number of duds. This ranks high on my failure list."

I also contacted Diane Szukovathy at Jello Mold Farm in Mount Vernon, Washington, as Andrea mentioned that she also was having difficulty with the Kordes roses. Diane said:

"They are still on probation at our farm. Foliage looking good and lots of promising buds this year, but last year wasn't great. I blamed it on the cold, wet weather, but am waiting to see what happens this year. We had issues with 'Sweet Antique' petals mysteriously shattering even when they looked good; again, I was blaming that on rain exposure, but not sure. We had significant issues with petal spotting on 'Antique Caramel', and were planning to get a rain cover up on them this year, but ran out of time. It's a drier year here and we just may catch the first flush free of rain—that will tell a lot. 'Mon Petit Chou' has been a complete bust—very promising swollen pink buds that have yet to open for us ever. Again, the last two years were nearly record-breaking for cold and wet, so can't say for sure. Ask me in a month. My best guess is that in our climate, these roses do best under cover. I know that Peterkort Roses grows 'Antique Caramel' and maybe some others in greenhouse, so you might ask Sandra."

So....I checked in with Sandra, who said:

"We grow 'Karamel Antike' and its sport 'Romantik Antike' successfully but they are indoors in our big greenhouses. I know the Europeans who grow roses outdoors have a pretty regular spray program. We do have issues with botrytis spots also. In addition, growing the way we do does not produce the large size flowers that you probably get at least from the first flush. In our climate the rain is a big problem as it trashes the flowers and there is disease."

So, it seems, there is a possibility for success with Kordes, and I'm hoping there have been breeding advances as I received my plants several years after Andrea and Bob. I found it interesting that we all put some blame on our climates and think the other coast has it better! I will continue to update on my trial. Although, they may not be the "outdoor" cutting rose Kordes had hoped for, I think it is still worth the effort to keep trying to breed a highly productive line of long-lasting, sweet smelling old-fashioned roses. (Not asking much, right?) As a designer, I don't think roses will ever go out of style, but I am extra thankful for my Austins in the midst of this crazy wedding season.

SOUTHEAST

Charles Hendrick
Yuri Hana Flower Farm, Inc.
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By the time you read this, we will all be neck deep in flowers and hopefully sales! Our spring (as I am sure yours was too) was very cool, resulting in our larkspur coming in a week later and missing Mother's Day, and our summer crops being weeks behind schedule. On the bright side…some of our hoophouse crops lasted longer too. As always we are at the mercy of the weather!

We are excited that our son Bryan has come to work with me on the farm, and will help to develop other sales routes. So far, it's been great to have him here, where my grandfather farmed the same land, and we can continue the family tradition. He has a lot to learn about growing, but he's eager and willing. He is getting married to a beautiful girl on June 22nd, and we are excited that our flowers will be used for his wedding, along with some gorgeous peonies we're keeping in the cooler from our friend Bernie Van Essendelft at Dual Venture Farm in Pantego, North Carolina. Bernie's peonies sell like hotcakes here! They are so fresh and beautiful!

For this Regional Report, I'm happy to introduce another Southeastern grower, who hails from Owensboro, Kentucky: Ella King of King's Country Gardens. Read Ella's informative responses to our questions and then visit her Facebook page and say hello.

How long have you been a flower farmer?
Ten years full time and enjoying every minute of it! I started digging in the dirt at age 3, when I was caught using one of my grandmother's silver spoons as my tool of choice. I've been digging ever since! My tools have changed, though.

What did you do before and how did you get into "the field"?
I was a social worker and public health program manager in my previous life. During this time, I was "out in the field" making home visits. Social service work was challenging and emotional so I found myself growing zinnias and other flowers in raised beds after work as a way to relieve stress.

What has been your biggest challenge?
I would say that my biggest challenge has been dealing with an ever-changing weather pattern here in western Kentucky. It seems the weather is never consistent from year to year. We have had 22 days of triple digit temperatures already this summer. To keep cool, I have started using a cooling towel called a "frogg togg". I use it in the field and take it to the market as well. Physically, the heat has taken its toll on me and the flowers this summer. I have learned to be flexible and work outside early in the morning or late in the day. I always have a plan B ready just in case something doesn't go as planned (which is usually what happens).

What has been your biggest accomplishment?
Being recognized in the community as someone who has a passion for growing the very best cut flowers has been extremely fulfilling for me. As ASCFG members have shared with me, I share my knowledge with my customers. To turn this passion into a growing business has been a lot of hard work but is an accomplishment I'm proud of!

What are your favorite flowers to grow?
My favorites are peonies, lilies, lisianthus, 'Limelight' hydrangeas, sunflowers, and 'Cardinal' basil. They all are easy to grow, easy to cut and care for, and make me money. That makes me happy!

How did you find the ASCFG?
I was visiting in Winnsboro, Texas and saw a gentleman selling flowers in front of a bakery. It was as if a light bulb went off in my head: I can do that! So after a 45-minute conversation he told me how to get started and what books would be best to read. Best of all, he told me about the ASCFG.

What is the best advice you have been given?
Most of my "good advice" has come from ASCFG members, either from the Bulletin Board or from personal conversations at the national conferences. Early on, Dave Dowling's posts on the Bulletin Board were so helpful! An example of the "best advice" would be Becky Devlin telling me I must have a web site and a Facebook page. Now my marketing takes off on its own when pictures are posted with my customers telling their friends about my flowers. Another example is when I spoke with Vicki Stamback at a conference a few years back. I asked her how to sell to florists since my florists were not eager to do business with a local grower at that time. She told me to put my flowers in the back of the van and drive from florist to florist and say, "Come look at my flowers!" And, of course, when I did that the week of Mother's Day, I sold every peony I had! Who could resist those beauties? I now have a wonderful partnership with our local florists.

What is the best advice for someone starting out?
First of all, I would say have many conversations with someone who has done it. You will find these people who are willing to share their expertise in the ASCFG. Secondly, I would recommend reading *The Flower Farmer, Growing for Market*, and as many back issues of *The Cut Flower Quarterly* as possible. Also, I would suggest that someone starting out work closely with their local extension office and their Department of Agriculture. Here in Kentucky, we have a KY Proud program that provides lots of support to those of us growing flowers, vegetables, and many other value added products. It is because of a horticulture marketing grant that I am able to attend many of the ASCFG national conferences. Early on I considered dropping my membership because of the expense. One of the best decisions I made was to continue my membership because this is where my knowledge springs from!

What is the one thing you've learned the hard way?
I started out growing anything and everything. In the past several years, I have slowly "weeded out" the flowers that are too much work for the money they make me or, in some cases, the money I lose growing them! I do experiment with a few new things every year to add to the excitement of "what's new" in the field. I feel I am now on track, planting in succession and not overplanting. Basically, I plant what I think I can sell. I am the only full time grower here. My husband still has a day job but does the part-time tractor work and the inevitable "honey-do" list. Another thing I've learned is not to throw unsold flowers on the "grave pile" like I did in early years. I now donate unsold flowers with a short vase life to our local domestic violence shelter. I had no idea the impact these flowers were having until, one Saturday, I saw several women lined up on an inside hallway at the shelter. They were watching me when the door swung open. I asked the worker, "What's going on?" and she said, "They have been waiting for you. You have no idea what this means to them." So we donate flowers to our local shelter every Saturday after our market. We are about "giving joy!"

Where do you see yourself in five years?
I hope to be right here, still "Growing Flowers and Giving Joy," increasing my profit, and running a fine-tuned flower business. I predict that I will hire part-time help because of the physical demands. We are still a work in progress. Thanks, ASCFG members, for mentoring me!

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Grants Available for Kentucky Growers

I received a horticulture marketing grant which paid for my ASCFG conference registration. Here is more information on the program.

The Kentucky Horticulture Council Market Development Cost Share is a reimbursement program for producers in the horticulture industry to:
- Learn new marketing techniques.
- Become aware of marketing trends and needs.
- Create and develop new and expand old markets.
- Create opportunities to network and make new contacts in the marketplace.

Funding is provided through a grant from the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture administers this program on behalf of the Kentucky Horticulture Council, Inc. Costs available for reimbursement include, but are not limited to, the following horticulture-related items:
- Registration fees for conferences, seminars, and educational workshops
- Booth fees for exhibiting at trade shows
- Tours of horticulture facilities and/or for wholesale agents
- Other market development avenues with specific pre-approval

I believe there is a $10,000 lifetime limit for this grant. In other words, I apply once a year to attend the ASCFG National Conference, and as long as there is a marketing session there is a better chance of my being approved for the grant. You must apply early in the year as funds are limited. When I return from the conference I write a one-page informational piece about what I learned (especially in marketing) and how I'm going to apply what I learned. We pay for our conference fees up front and then I submit their reimbursement form, along with what I learned and receipts that are used to "match" the amount given. Transportation costs, hotel costs and the cost of food can be counted toward the "match". Usually in January following the conference I receive a check for the cost of the conference fee. Once we reach the limit we will no longer be eligible for the funding. You must be in the horticulture industry as well as being a registered "Kentucky Proud" member to qualify.

If you have questions contact Adam Watson, adam.watson@ky.gov.
(502) 564-4983.

Hope this isn't too confusing. I'm not sure if any other states do this. I have certainly benefited from this grant and highly recommend applying for it if you are a Kentucky grower!

—Ella King

MIDWEST

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We are into summer and the days are getting longer for us here in Illinois. As I write my thoughts I think back to our spring and how different it was from last year. Our temps were more in the normal range than they needed to be. With the normal temps we were able to bring crop like snowball viburnum, lilac, cherry, tulips, and iris to our farmers' market this year. Last year these crops were all finished before market started or shortly thereafter.

WET, WET, and WET! That sums it up here. Broke precipitation records January through May statewide, and it was the wettest March-May for our county. May was four inches above normal rainfall, with that amount we were 3-4 weeks behind of planting. Beds would dry out for 3-4 days, got the ground worked up and planted, then 3-4 more days of moisture. So we played catch-up going into the month of June.

We were able to get plug trays sown on the rainy days, and flowering branches cut in the rain. Getting a few thousand sunflower and the same for the zinnia planted on the dry days. With all this rainfall the peony and lilac crops were much better yields than last year. I feel those crops benefited from all the extra moisture.

That's enough of my complaining of the weather. Just goes to show positive results come from issues we have no control over. Speaking with other growers in our region, some have had to deal with flooding and tornadoes.

Our update on farmers' markets: This was our best for sales. We were up over 50%. Our attendances were also up in May. Consumer confidence and desire have been growing. My challenge

has been getting enough product to meet demand. I decided before our market started that I would raise the prices on our general mixed bouquets and solid bunch bouquets. Our staple sunflower bunches will remain the same as last year. Our flowering branches and peony prices were raised at the market and wholesale levels.

For the past six years, classes from the Parkland College floral department have visited my farm. They usually come in the fall, but this year they came in May so they could see spring crops. I usually start in the barn, with a history of the farm, and then discuss growing, harvesting, shipping, marketing, and grading. After that, I have them identify about 20 branches (flowering and foliage), and determine how they were grown and used in designs. Then we headed out to tour the fields.

There were 15 students this year, up from the typical 10-12, and after the session, six of them stayed for another hour of questions. They wanted more information on cut flower production, and were eager to see how a flower goes from start to finish. This class also takes field trips to a retail florist and floral wholesaler.

One of the students started an internship with my farm, which sets up a great relationship with the school. If you're using college interns, these are a great source. Bringing college classes to your farm is valuable to the farm as well as to the students, and what they can learn from you. After all, they may want to follow in your footsteps. Pay it forward one more time.

The ASCFG has two events coming up this summer and fall, both landing in Ohio. The first is July 13-16 in Columbus, the OFA Short Course. This event is the largest horticulture trade show in North America, all under one roof. If you have an opportunity this year, please check it out. If not this year, plan ahead for 2014.

The ASCFG will have a booth promoting the organization and American Grown flowers.

Our "From Seed to Sale" meeting is October 7-8 on the campus of OSU-OARDC in Wooster, Ohio. Monday the 7th around 1:00pm will start a tour of Secrest Arboretum. Our guide for the afternoon will be Director Ken Cochran, showing us what we need to know in woodies for your farm's product mix. Ken's tour will wind up around 5:00, when we will move inside for an evening reception in the Miller Pavilion.

On Tuesday, Steve and Gretel Adams from Sunny Meadows will give us the background of their farm and explain their successful production and marketing strategies. Next will be Ken Cochran and others on a panel discussion of holly and other woodies. At 10:00 a.m. Dave Dowling will give a program on lilies. At 11:00 a.m. I will talk about willows, followed by lunch at noon. After lunch there will be concurrent sessions on the hydrangea, peony, sunflower, dahlia, dianthus, and lisianthus. Plan to attend this program, and you will bring back to your farm loads of information.

Looking forward to seeing you at one of these Ohio events.

SOUTH-CENTRAL

Rita Anders
Cuts of Color
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Time sure flies. When our children were in school, our year was marked by what sport we were playing since they were in one sport and then off to another. The year went from volleyball-football to basketball to softball-baseball, depending which child was playing. Now our lives go from winter to spring to summer and finally fall flowers. In school no planning was made to go from one season to the next.

It's not the same with flower growing. A well-laid plan leads to success. Without a well-written plan you will never remember to order bulbs when their availability is at the highest so that you get what you want. Order too late and you have to settle for what's left or none at all. Keeping detailed records of when you plant seed, germination times, transplant dates, and first harvest of crop can sure help when someone wants to know when you will have a crop available. Weather does play a part in the timing but you will have a good idea of availability.

This year was so different than last year's spring. Frost in Texas at the end of April was a first for our farm. We actually enjoyed so many of our spring crops a lot longer this year than I can ever remember. I was thinking is this what growers in the North experience and thinking wow, I like this. Other growers like Tanis Clifton, not so much. Lilies are a big part of her business, and the cold weather left her in a pinch because none bloomed in time for Mother's Day. When it finally warmed up, she had 1000 lilies bloom at one time and that's just too many for her markets.

Our flower business has been awesome this year. The economy in our part of the region has been booming. Lots and lots of weddings this year and great flower sales have kept our crew hopping. Doing a full market sale and two weddings on some weekends have really showed me the strengths of having a great work crew.

From Folsom, Louisiana, Nancy Bartlett reports record Mother Day's sales and is excited about growing again. So happy for her as she took a hit from the hurricane after last year's Regional Meeting at her farm.

Almost every day my husband, who works off the farm (the real money-maker in our family), leaves the house saying "You don't know how good you have it. What I would give to do what you do all day." I believe he thinks I sit on my rear and listen to the birds sing all day and put cute little flowers together. Deep down I know he knows what I do is hard and he is just kidding but yes he really believes that I have it good. Well it is good and I thank God everyday that I get to do what I do.

Last week I had to keep one of my 3-year-old granddaughters with me while trying to pick lilies. We made it fun for her by riding on the golf cart from patch to patch, and by the time we got done she knew how to strip the leaves off lilies and

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put them in the bucket while learning to count. Those are the special memories. I'm very lucky to have the support around me that allows me to spend a lot of time with the flowers.

That support team goes out farther than just my husband. Recently myself and two young ladies who work for me spent 11 hours putting together two weddings, and we were trying to finish up to get out of town for a long weekend. I could see it was not going to happen if I didn't call in the troops. I happen to have the best sister in the whole wide world and I made a call to her because I knew she was off and right down the road and over she came. Next I call my daughter, who was coming to pick me up to go out of town and said you better come a couple of hours early to help me get finished or we are not leaving as planned. Well, she comes over with a couple of the kiddos and we put them to work, too. The eight-year-old and my daughter went to pick tomatoes, and then put flowers in water piks for the wedding . My sister makes a cake topper and a memory vase and runs those out to the site and comes back to help the girls make 22 floral bowls for a brunch before leaving for a softball playoff game. My niece and one of the girls working for me are taking detailed notes of where all these flowers go and when while I'm trying to finish making 12 wrist corsages and a halo. My nephew who is working for me for the summer is also standing by for a detailed list of what to pick and water while I'm out of town. Thanks to an awesome family, an iPhone with instant messaging and photos, we were able to be away from the farm and make it all happen. I told you this story to show how teamwork can make things happen. Yep and you are probably wondering where is my husband through all this. He's already at the beach enjoying the good life with some of the other kiddos and now you know who really has it made.

Flower farming has its ups and downs in production, and keeping a full-time crew is a hurdle when it comes to being able to pay a person what they need to make to keep them working for you and still make a profit. Finding that level of production and diversity versus income to make a profit is different on every farm and that has to be worked out by each grower. There are many ways to market your flowers and you just have to figure out the perfect recipe for your farm.

The "buy local-grown" niche has really been catching on in our area. Many brides are sourcing local growers to grow their flowers, and I'm very glad when that grower is myself. A Houston-area flower wholesaler is sourcing out Texas-grown flowers for a large chain to push the local bouquet, and is currently working with a couple of our Region's growers to start making that happen. Hopefully in my next report I can tell you how all that is going. Right now it's all in the beginning stages and I hope them the best. I think the future for cut flowers is very bright and there are a lot of opportunities out there. You just have to hustle and they will come. I'm finding out that even event venues are looking to source out local flowers because we have picked up two new ones and a new wedding planner by just word of mouth and social networking in the last month.

There are two more super regional meetings left to attend this year. I hope you choose to go to one or both because I think they are going to be really good. Check the ASCFG web site and make your reservations now. Happy growing and enjoy your summer.

WEST and NORTHWEST

Paula Rice
BeeHaven Farm
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It would have been nice to have a crystal ball when we were starting our flower farm. We could have asked, "Will we find good markets for our flowers? Will we be profitable? Where should we begin and what are the most important things we will need first? Do we have what it takes?" The list goes on and on. But we can't see into the future, we must submit ourselves to those years of trial and error, and learning.

Get that learning process going and do something. Why? Because first of all, before you invest in all the "I needs", you must find out if you've got what it takes to be a flower farmer. Are you brave enough to try to sell your flowers to a grocery store? How about a wholesaler? Are you willing to walk into a shop and engage a florist? Are you willing to sell weekly at a farmers' market? Or do you want to start smaller and maybe just go with a subscription service around town? Be honest with yourself and find your willing level of commitment and start growing flowers.

My test was investing a whopping $300 for lily bulbs from Gloeckner my second year. And finally, one day, all those fat, swollen, slightly-colored lily buds were swaying in the breeze STARING at me, challenging me: "What are you going to do? Do you have what it takes?"

Another time, when I had the worst market day of my new flower farming career, and found myself pulling into hotels and businesses on my way home to sell my left over abundance, I knew… yes, I do have what it takes.

Okay so I've got what it takes—now the next discovery. I stopped seeing my farm as some romantic, fluffy dream and wanted to see it run more efficiently and effectively—you know, like a business. This is the next natural step to building your company. But it takes time, experience, and trial and error to know what your particular needs are, which brings me to the meat of my subject for you.

I needed to make some drastic changes and up-scales to match the markets I had developed. We were working a lot harder than we needed to, simply because we didn't have the infrastructure and equipment to make it easier. Why? No money. If you don't have a tractor, you dig. If you can't afford weed cloth, you weed. If you don't have a cooler, you cut it all in one day before your market. And the list goes on and on and it's all labor intensive and expensive.

With a few years under my belt, I now better understand what it was I needed to run a tighter ship. I was ready for the real plunge. Enter a very new loan program offered by the USDA Farm Service Agency. They call it a microloan, and if you qualify you can receive funds of up to $35,000—enough money to do something substantial. This was just what I needed, and they simplified the application process so much, it was easy and do-able. The paperwork was very simple; I completed it in about 20 minutes. The interest rate was extremely low at 1.125% and the term of the loan can be up to seven years. We did put up collateral for the amount we requested, but it wasn't our land and the loan officer was very flexible on what it could be. They requested proof of income for the farm and from any outside work, so I provided a trial balance showing what our sales were for the previous year, proving that we do have markets and generate income with our flowers. We will make our yearly payment at the end of our season (it's very low). I don't really advocate large loans for startups, because I think an important element to flower farming success (as with anything) is determining first if you have what it takes. But if you find yourself dedicated to your farming and lacking in tools and infrastructure this microloan could be a serious tool to help you succeed.

One of the speakers at the November 3-4 meeting in Rhode Island will be a USDA FSA agent, who will speak about this very same program. Get to this meeting and bring your questions, see if it is something that could work for you. There isn't a lot of help out there for small growers, and this loan program could really help bridge that valley between making it as a small grower or burning out for lack of resources. This may possibly be a tool you could use as you find yourself in the "middle years" of struggling to get over the hump and to the other side.

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The OFA Short Course is the largest horticultural trade show in the country, attracting tens of thousands of attendees. The ASCFG is sponsoring a session called "Ideas in Design", a management and floral design program that promises innovative techniques for retail florists and other designers. We'll have a display at the Short Course, and thank these members for donating floral product for it, and for the design program.

Thanks to these ASCFG members for donating floral product:
Alaska Peony Growers
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2013 ASCFG Elections

In 2013, ASCFG members will elect a President and Vice-president (two-year terms), and Regional Directors for the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Southeast (three-year terms). We are fortunate that several people have stepped forward as nominees for these offices. Please review each candidate's biographical sketch, as well as the Cut Flower of the Year information. An electronic ballot will be sent later this summer. When you receive the email, take just a few minutes to cast your vote.

Your participation is important!

President

Frank Arnosky

It would not be much of an exaggeration to say that everything I learned about cut flowers I learned from the ASCFG. That is close to the truth. My wife Pamela and I have been involved with the ASCFG for almost 20 years now, and we have relied heavily on the friendships and open exchange of ideas that we get from being members. From discovering an ancient copy of Fritz Bahr's *Commercial Floriculture* in a dusty bookstore in west Texas, to standing in awe in a state-of-the-art Dutch style greenhouse at the ASCFG tour in Vancouver, the ASCFG has been the driving force in our desire to always be better growers.

I have a degree in Horticulture from Michigan State University, and have done graduate work at Texas A&M. Pamela and I have run our cut flower operation here in Texas since 1993. For many years we wrote a cut flower column in *Growing for Market*. Our main market is grocery store sales, but we sell to just about every aspect of the business: florists, wholesalers, our own retail farm market, and wedding work. From tornadoes to panicky brides, we've seen just about everything.

I think I could bring some of this experience to the position as president of the ASCFG. It's time I give something back to the ASCFG, and I hope I can count on your vote for ASCFG President.

Ko Klaver

My 20-year involvement with the ASCFG includes being an industry sales rep, as well as funding lily research programs. I also served as the ASCFG's Industry Liaison 2008-2011. Then I focused on the American Grown Cut Flowers Initiative, which represents, promotes, and protects U.S. flower growers and their farms. I lobbied on behalf of the ASCFG a few months ago, and it was a great learning curve.

I have come to realize that now is the time to bring this to the attention of our federal and state governments, and strengthen and renew the domestic cut flower industry. It doesn't matter who is growing what, but we certainly can and should be proud of our domestic cut flower production. It is my desire to formulate a healthy national campaign to make our voices heard, as in my humble opinion ASCFG is the strongest national network of cut flower growers for undertaking this effort.

ASCFG membership must be of value to all specialty cut flower growers, no matter what size, because these days any American cut flower grower is pretty much a specialty cut flower grower.

Our roots stem from the efforts of Allan Armitage at UGA in 1988 when he and others developed a grassroots coalition to exchange growing information and experience and bundle its activities, and that is still the same today. What has changed is the world around us. Now we are returning to local and regional production of sustainably-grown cut flowers.

Just as every specialty flower in the field comes to blossom in a floral arrangement, so will we blossom as an industry and be stronger together. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you.

Vice President

Mike Hutchinson

As a reformed vegetable grower, I am truly grateful to the ASCFG for all the help and advice we have received as my wife Polly and I have taken on full-time flower farming as our way of life. We joined the group in 2003 and felt welcomed the minute we showed up. The conferences, *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, farm tours, the Bulletin Board, and the truly wonderful staff and members make this organization special. The ASCFG has done so much to help us, I feel that I should give back and volunteer to be on the Board.

Thanks to the help of the ASCFG, our farm now has 4 acres in production with 1/4 acre under plastic hoops and greenhouses. We do 4 farmers' markets a week in the peak summer season, sell some flowers wholesale to florists, and design and deliver 50+ weddings and events each year. We use a variety of production practices, many of which have been shared by other members.

As you know, Polly has been thoroughly involved in the organization as Regional Director, conference coordinator, and President. Through the years, I have tagged along in that effort, editing this and that, helping at the conferences or brainstorming ideas to make things better. I feel I have picked up a fair bit of what is going on with the organization and will be ready to hit the ground running in my vice-presidential duties should I be elected.

I am excited to see where the organization is going and want to help it get there. I like some of the recent new initiatives such as the mini conferences and national lobbying effort and look forward to the future growth of the organization. Thanks for considering me. I would enjoy the opportunity to serve as vice-president.

Doug Trott

My wife Robin and I operate a small farm in west-central Minnesota that we've owned since 2001. We have done some market gardening, as well as produced eggs, beef, pork and goats, but decided to focus on flowers a few years ago. We are growing on two acres this year, with three high tunnels, and are building our first greenhouse. We market primarily to florists and designers.

Starting small, and with the help of ASCFG meetings, publications and members, we've been able to at least triple our flower business every year. I admit that I like every aspect of the flower farm: marketing, financial planning, reading seed catalogs, planning irrigation systems, building structures, modifying tools, planting and especially harvesting. Even weeding isn't too bad when you consider the alternatives!

The ASCFG has made all of this possible, and I would be delighted to serve in any way I can. We are a tremendously diverse group in terms of what we grow, our growing conditions, our equipment and facilities, our markets and our business strategies, and yet no matter how unique our own situation seems, there is no doubt another member doing at least some of the same things. I would like to help us pool our knowledge even more than we already do, so that we are all able to meet our goals.

Northeast Regional Director

Diana Doll

Greetings from StrayCat Flower Farm. My first encounter with the ASCFG was at the 1992 National Conference here in Burlington, Vermont. How thrilled I was to come upon this organization of growers dedicated to networking for the benefit of all! Back then, my 2-acre farm was breaking ground on land rented from Burlington's sole remaining dairy farm, which had been in operation since the mid 1800's. I'm still working on improving this heavily compacted soil, in the flood plain of the Winooski River, excessive in phosphorus, and where the daily mosquito population keeps us moving through our work at record speed.

I would be honored to serve as Northeast Regional Director so I could participate more actively in all that the ASCFG does. I've been growing and marketing cut flowers since 1988 at the Burlington Farmers' Market, 2 downtown grocery stores, weekly vases to local businesses, 'same-day' vase deliveries to area hospitals, on-farm 'pick-from-our-cooler' customers, and weddings (both bulk DIY and full-service design).

If you'd like to chat flowers, please call me 802-865-0068. I'm more likely to pick up the phone than to catch up with emails!

Carolyn Snell

I grew up on the apple and poultry farm my great-grandpa started in 1926 in Buxton, Maine. My family now grows vegetables, herbs, plants, and fruit sold from our 25 acres, and at two farmers' markets. Cut flowers have long been part of our repertoire, mostly mixed bouquets for farmers' markets, and as I gradually took over the reins of the flower growing, Carolyn Snell Designs was born. We grow just under two acres of field flowers, and more in greenhouses and hoophouses. I have been adding various crops and installing a few woodies to increase diversity and extend my season, as well as expanding my wedding design business. Joining the ASCFG was a real turning point for me. I have been amazed by the diversity of growers and generosity of knowledge and experience. The Bulletin Board, *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, and Regional and National Conferences have really helped me grow my business. I love the idea of helping the ASCFG continue to support growers, and keep connecting us across our sometimes challenging geography. I have learned so much from Chas, Polly, and Missy about growing and selling in our Northeast Region. I am looking forward to learning more and helping others.

Southeast Regional Director

Tanis Clifton

I have been gardening all my adult life so it makes sense that I finally met my dream job, "Flower Farmer!" My gardening work and interests have evolved over the years, from simply trying to make a beautiful garden to enjoy, to working at a garden center, to going through the master gardener program, to joining the local garden club and finally, ultimately, joining the awesome folks in the ASCFG and growing commercially.

My husband and I grow cut flowers on just under an acre, which includes one hoophouse and a small seedling greenhouse, in the rolling hills of rural Mississippi. We dove into the commercial cut flower business headfirst and were fortunate enough to start with a hoophouse our first year, which allowed us to grow some awesome cuts. Due to the rural area in which we live, the market for cut flowers has been a challenge to find, however we continue to learn and grown. We deliver flowers to florists over a 140-mile route and set up at an awesome farmers market every Saturday.

I love the ASCFG and I feel sure that I would not be where I am today if it were not for this incredible organization. I am continuously amazed by all of the invaluable wealth of information shared by this generous group of growers. I would love to get involved and help the ASCFG organization continue to grow and service even more of the varied needs of its members.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Director

Jennie Love

I was a lucky recipient of the Dave Dowling scholarship in 2009 and attended my first National Conference that year, where I made a few of you laugh with my zealous thank-you speech That same year I launched Love 'n Fresh Flowers, two acres within Philadelphia city limits dedicated to growing hundreds of specialty cut flower varieties.

With the in-depth information I learned on the Bulletin Board, at many meetings and conferences, and through invaluable mentoring from experienced members, I was able to quickly expand my flower business beyond my wildest dreams. I am excited by the opportunity to return those many favors by sharing my own knowledge and experiences.

I grew up on a fifth-generation dairy farm and worked ten years as a marketing professional before returning to working the soil. That experience has been key in successfully branding and promoting my business to weddings and special events, now the bulk of my business. I also run a popular flower CSA and sell to specialty grocery stores and high-end florists.

As a professional writer and photographer, I'm excited to write for *The Cut Flower Quarterly* and share lots of information and beautiful photos. Through my website and a special collaboration called The Seasonal Bouquet Project (www.theseasonalbouquetproject.com), I am working hard to promote local, seasonal flowers to the public. I firmly believe that we can shift the industry in our favor and make us all a little more lucrative. I would love to be a Regional Director so I can help others, however possible, build their own flourishing flower farms.

Kate Sparks

I am the owner and chief weeder of Lilies and Lavender, a sustainably-managed cut flower farm in Doylestown, Pennsyvania. I have been a member of the ASCFG for 14 years and a passionate cut flower grower for 15. I grow on about 3 ½ acres with two greenhouses, two cold frames and fields of woodies, perennials and annuals. I've recently added a studio for floral design.

When I bought my property 17 years ago I seriously did not know the difference between a pansy and a petunia. Without a background in horticulture I needed lots of help. The members of the ASCFG very generously shared their horticultural knowledge and marketing expertise with me. Without the help of ASCFG members and the affiliated university researchers I would not be farming today. After 15 years I would love the chance to serve as Regional Director and pass on my own knowledge to other members.

Cut Flowers of the Year Nominees

Fresh
Sunflower 'Goldy Double'
Sunflower 'Vincent Fresh'
Snapdragon Chantilly Series
Campanula medium 'Campana'
Celosia 'Sunday Orange'

Woody
Salix 'Purple Heirloom'
Cornus 'Midwinter Fire'
Cotinus 'Royal Purple'
Abelia mosananesis
Hydrangea Everlasting Series

Bulb
Anemone 'Galilee Blue'
Calla 'Captain Paris'
Tulip 'Maureen'
Tulip 'Spring Green'
Lily 'Belonica'

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

Solutions in your community

Cut Flower Tour
August 6, 2013

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Locations

Long Season Statice Farm, Salisbury, MD

Seaberry Farm, Federalsburg, MD

Sponsored by
University of Maryland Extension

In cooperation with:
Maryland Greenhouse Growers' Association
Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers

Registration and Information

(301) 596-9413

Registration/Check-in begins at 8:00 a.m Tour starts at 8:30 a.m.
8:30 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Long Season Statice has been producing cuts for local florists since 1995. A wide variety of plants are grown on three acres, allowing for harvest almost year-round. Early season cuts include several types of willow, followed by a variety of over-wintered bulbs and perennials. Among the woody cuts are lilacs, redbud, weigela, hypericum, privet, callicarpa, cotinus, viburnum and eucalyptus. Several varieties of hydrangeas and astilbe are grown. Successive plantings of annuals usually ensures sunflowers, zinnias, marigolds, tuberose, and gomphrena on a weekly basis, with lisianthus, asters, dahlias, and statice at narrower windows. Sorghum and millet varieties are used as floral cuts in the fall, and winter brings into production nandina and deciduous hollies. Selling to local florists as compared to farmers' markets decreases the time spent on sales and increases the time in field production.
Note: NO bathroom facilities available at this site.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Travel to Seaberry Farm, 2770 Wright Road, Federalsburg, MD
Drs. Richard and Wenfei Uva own Seaberry Farm – a 36-acre specialty fruit and flower farm in Federalsburg, Maryland. In 2006, Rick, Wenfei and their two young children relocated to the Delmarva area to start a farm. Today, both Wenfei and Rick work full-time on the farm with 5 employees. Seaberry Farm grows trees and shrubs for woody cut branches as well as a wide variety of perennial and annual cut flowers. They also cultivate specialty fruits, including peaches, plums, figs, pawpaws and beach plum (a fruit native to the U.S. eastern seaboard). Their flowers and fruit are shipped to wholesale buyers around the Northeast, and their beach plums are sold to wineries and jam makers around the region. They also retail their flower and fruit products at local farmers markets and provide full-service floral design for weddings and events

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m Seaberry Farm Tour:
After a short introduction we will tour the farm. Come prepared to get lots of good walking exercise as we tour their diverse and extensive plantings. Some of the topics will include: Brief overview of Seaberry Farm, staff, fruit and flower crops; Discussion of wedding and event flower business; Flower arranging workshop; Cooler; Field grown annual and perennial flowers; Specialized weed sprayers; and Woody cut stem production

At Long Season Statice and Seaberry Farms, they like to experiment with new varieties and continually expand their cut flower palettes. These farms will be a real treat to tour and you will come away with many new ideas on cut flower production methods and varieties.

During the tour, University of Maryland Extension Specialists will cover major disease, insect and weed identification and control of some the major cut flower crops seen on the tour. Dr. David Clement, Extension Plant Pathologist, will cover diseases of cut flowers and control options. Chuck Schuster and Ginny Rosenkranz, University of Maryland Extension educators, will cover control of weeds of summer – including thistle control. Focus will be on methods that can be used to control perennial summer weeds as well as prepare for fall germinating annual weeds. A review of the available cultural and chemical methods will be discussed. Stanton Gill, Extension Specialist, in IPM will cover thrips control and other insects of cut flowers with control options.

The beauty still begins right here.

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by Debra Prinzing

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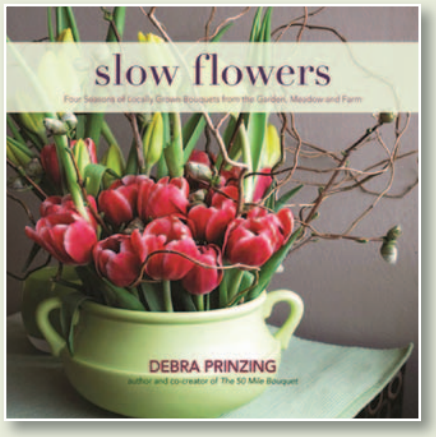

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Spring Holidays Show Uptick for Florists

By Ira Silvergleit

With 50 percent of florists reporting year-over-year sales increases, Mother's Day was the most successful spring holiday of 2013, according to SAF's Spring Holidays Sales Survey. The results are based on more than 250 responses and looked at sales results for nine spring holidays .

Not surprisingly, the three most important floral holidays of the season were Mother's Day followed by Easter and Administrative Professionals Week (APW)/Secretaries Week. The latter two holiday occasions saw sales increases at 24 and 21 percent of shops, respectively.

Average sales increases and decreases for the three major spring holidays are shown in the table below:

Holiday	Average Increase %	Average Decrease %
APW/PSW	9.2	15.0
Easter	8.7	12.8
Mother's Day	11.8	10.5

Comparisons for the past two years are available under each holiday on the SAF website. [http://www.safnow.org/holidays]

APW

The average transaction amount for APW was $40.54, compared to $39.87 and $35.20 last year and the year before. Just under 20 percent of sales came from the florists' websites.

Easter

About three quarters of florists engaged in the same level of promotion for Easter as in 2012, resulting in increases in transactions at 24 percent of shops. Nevertheless, a majority of florist shops saw decreases in sales of traditional Easter lilies as well as incoming wire orders. Wire-outs fell at 48 percent of shops.

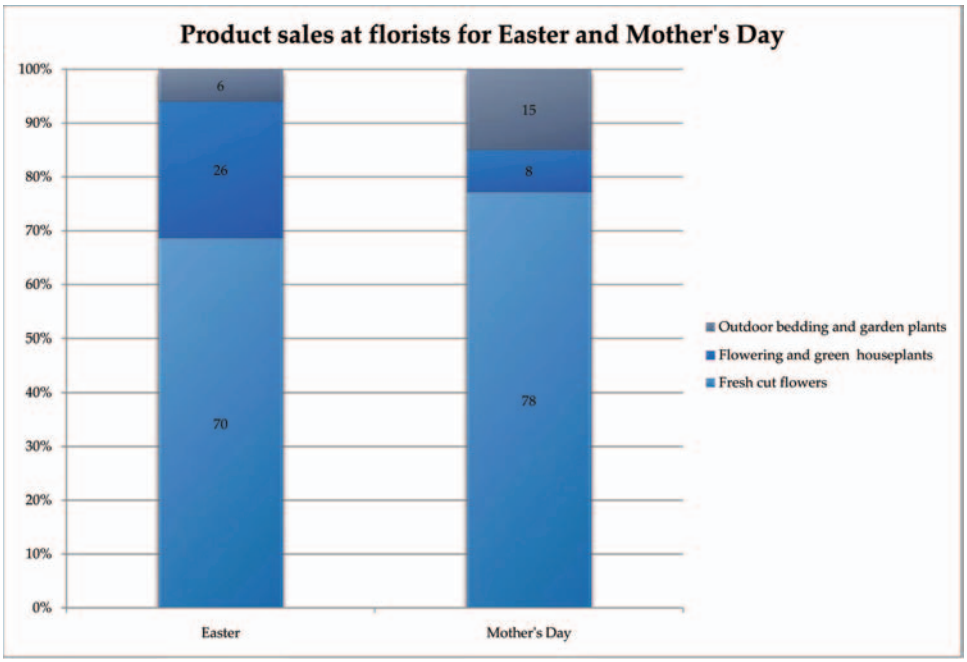
Florists did agree about where most of their Easter competition came from, with supermarkets topping the list for 39 percent of owners. Order gatherers and mass merchandisers each garnered 15 percent of responses. Other outlets saw around 5 percent of responses, some fewer.

Cut flowers accounted for 70 percent of sales. The average transaction amount was $45.58, compared to $43.67 and $43.65 last year and in 2011. Roughly seven in ten florists agreed that sales of three types of Easter lilies (single, double and triple stems or bulbs per pot) were down or flat from last year's levels. Seventeen percent of orders came in through the shop's website.

Mother's Day

Of the three major spring holidays, average transaction amounts at retail florists were highest for Mother's Day, averaging $58.42each. Last year the average was $54 compared to $51.53 the year before.(See how flowers and florists came out at Mother's Day according to an SAF-commissioned consumer poll, here. The number of transactions increased at almost half the shops (49 percent), though 44 percent and 39 percent of florists reported decreases in wire-in and wire-out orders respectively. Fewer than a quarter of shops increased their delivery charges this year and just under a quarter of sales were generated by the shop's website. Phone orders dominated both Mother's Day and Easter orders.

Order gatherers and supermarkets were judged as the most significant source of competition at Mother's Day, followed in order by online florists, wire services, direct flower shippers, big box/ mass merchandisers, local florists, garden centers and other venues.



Data compiled and provided to the ASCFG by the Society of American Florists.

SAF
SOCIETY of AMERICAN FLORISTS

www.safnow.org

FROM the **DIRECTOR**

Judy Laushman

June is typically the month schoolchildren are released, families plan vacations, and gas prices climb as roads fill with travelers. No such leisure awaits flower growers, especially this year, after such a late and cool spring pushed back production and harvesting for many in several states. Now it's catch-up time.

It's similar for us in the ASCFG office. After a bustling early 2013, with grower meetings in North Carolina and Texas, a Board of Directors meeting, and planning for two more meetings, in Ohio and Rhode Island, we're able to settle down a bit, to concentrate on and look forward to other projects.

The ASCFG web site is undergoing a facelift. It doesn't need major surgery, but a few lifts and tucks here and there. Occasional injections of filler are necessary to keep any online information fresh. We're always checking Member Pages in the Flower Search, and are pleased to see that you're also updating yours, adding photos and links, and tweaking your Description of Business as your companies evolve. If you're not, or if you need help, we're happy to provide it.

If you haven't looked at the ASCFG site lately, check it out at ascfg.org. Let us know what you might change.

One of our goals is to create an index of the back issues of *The Cut Flower Quarterly* that are posted in Members Only. Twenty-five years, four magazines a year—that's a lot of Culture Profiles and IPM Updates to catalog. It will be a boon for new members, who will be more easily able to find archived information.

At the same time, we're looking at the larger picture: promoting locally-grown cut flowers to retail and wholesale customers, and to the general buying product. Our participation in the OFA Short Course, and sponsorship of this year's "Floral Ideas in Design", give us another toe in the door.

Many florists and designers come to Short Course from the middle of the country, where they may not have as easy access to specialty cut flowers as those from more densely populated areas. It is truly a revelation for some of them to see firsthand our growers' fresh lilies and sunflowers, monarda and dahlias, and woodies and peonies.

Just as valuable are the efforts made by our national partners in promotion. Debra Prinzing, author of *The 50 Mile Bouquet* and *Slow Flowers*, writes frequently and eloquently on the value and importance of locally-grown flowers. She knows many of our growers personally, and is our most effective and enthusiastic cheerleader. Kasey Cronquist is the CEO of the California Cut Flower Commission, and is a tireless advocate for American-grown floral product. His projects for the Commission are beautifully done.

Working together, we can raise awareness of the easy availability, and superior quality of our cut flowers.

Flowers leave some of their fragrance in the hand that bestows them.

— Chinese proverb

25 Years - Four Celebrations

"From Seed to Sale"
October 7-8, 2013
OSU-OARDC Shisler Center
Wooster, Ohio

From Seed to Sale

Plants. It's all about the plants. Follow each speaker as he or she discusses the processes used to produce a flower crop, starting with variety selection and scheduling, through planting , growing-on, pest and weed control, harvest, postharvest handling procedures, all the way to marketing, pricing, and design. Field and hoophouse options will be covered.

The Secrest Arboretum is a gem in the middle of Ohio's scenic Amish country, and makes the perfect setting for plant enthusiasts. Wooster is an easy drive for those in the Midwest, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic states.

Wrap up your 2013 season with inspiration and information!

Monday, October 7

1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Tour of Secrest Arboretum with Director Ken Cochran
Ken Cochran is the perfect tour guide for the ASCFG. Not only are woody ornamental plants his life's blood, his research provides a valuable experience for "what works" as a cut flower.
6:00 – 9:00 p.m. Reception in Miller Pavilion

Tuesday, October 8

Shisler Auditorium

8:00-8:15 a.m. **Welcome**

8:15 a.m. **Sunny Meadows Flower Farm Review** Steve and Gretel Adams are young flower growers who farm just outside Columbus. Learn the secrets of their production and marketing successes.

9:00 a.m. **Winterberry and Other Branches** Ken Cochran, OSU/OARDC, Wooster. Ken Cochran will lead a panel discussion on winterberry and other cut branches. Growers will talk about production and marketing, research, and use in event design.

10:00 a.m. **Lily** Dave Dowling, Farmhouse Flowers & Plants, Brookeville, Maryland

11:00 a.m. **Willow** Kent Miles, Illinois Willows, Seymour

12:00 p.m. **Lunch included**

Concurrent Sessions

1:00 p.m.

Hydrangea
TBA

Peony
David and Jill Russell
Boreal Peonies, Liberty, Indiana

2:00 p.m.

Sunflower
Kent Miles, Illinois Willows,
Seymour

Dahlia
Bob Wollam. Wollam Gardens
Jeffersonton, Virginia

3:00 p.m.

Dianthus
Joe Schmitt, Fair Field Flowers
Madison, Wisconsin

Lisianthus
Steve and Gretel Adams,
Sunny Meadows Flower Farm,
Columbus, Ohio

25 Years - Four Celebrations

"The ASCFG Growers' Business School"
November 3-4, 2013

URI Coastal Institute
Bay Campus URI
Narragansett, Rhode Island

Robin Hollow Farm
1057 Gilbert Stuart Road
Saunderstown, Rhode Island

Sunday, November 3 _____ **URI Coastal Institute, Narragansett, Rhode Island**

12:30 **Registration**

1:00-1:30 **Welcome**
Missy Bahret, Old Friends Farm, Amherst, Massachusetts
Becky Devlin, Roost Flowers and Design, Virginia Beach, Virginia

1:30-2:30 **Goal Setting and Business Decision Making**
Missy Bahret, Old Friends Farm, Amherst, Massachusetts
Whether you are new to your business or have been at it for awhile, it is important to have clear goals and a decision-making process. Missy Bahret shares Holistic Management (HM) tools she uses for her 22-acre farm business. This workshop will include some "hands-on" work on for your business goal for 2014, and will go through practice examples of the HM business decision-making approach.

2:30-2:45 **Break**

2:45-5:00 **Growers' Seasonal Tour Panel**
Suzanne Nolter, Blazing Star Farm, Block Island, Rhode Island
Carolyn Snell, Carolyn Snell Designs, Bar Mills, Maine
Erin Windham, Windham Gardens, Granby, Connecticut
Pictures speak a thousand words, and these mini slide shows from three established growers through the seasons will be worth millions! Photos will be of organizational systems, growing systems, marketing styles, harvesting styles, transport, extended season and more!

Monday, November 4 _____ **URI Coastal Institute and Robin Hollow Farm**

8:00- 8:15 **Welcome**
Polly Hutchison, Robin Hollow Farm, Saunderstown, Rhode Island
Judy Laushman, ASCFG

8:15-9:00 **Hutch's Tips**
Mike Hutchison, Robin Hollow Farm, Saunderstown, Rhode Island
A long-time veggie grower turned flower grower, Mike will share tricks of the trade he has learned over the years. With photos and explanations, he'll cover a wide array of crop production systems and techniques. There will be something for every experience level here.

9:00-10:00 **Crop Planning and Record Keeping**
To be announced

10:00-10:30 **Break Update on American Grown program**

10:30 -12:00 **Marketing Strategies and Implementation: Examination of Two Marketing Styles**
Becky Devlin, Roost Flowers and Design, Virginia Beach, Virginia
Jim Kelly, Emerald Farm, Glen Cove, New York
Plant some marketing seeds for 2014. Learn from established growers (and sellers) about their marketing techniques. Jim grows and sells primarily to local florists and at farmers' markets, and Becky offers bouquet subscriptions, flowers for events, and design workshops.

12:00-1:30 **Lunch included with registration. Vendor presentations**

1:30-2:15 _____ **Concurrent Sessions** _____

Getting the Most Stems from your Plant Choice
Chris Wien, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
A well-known researcher, Chris will share his findings on the productivity of various cut flowers, and how to optimize their saleable cuts. He will share specific cultivars, techniques for producing the best flowers, and season-extension tips.

USDA and Farm Service Agency Microloans
Roxanne Boisse, USDA, Brighton, Rhode Island
Producers can apply for a maximum of $35,000 for startup expenses like hoophouses for season extension, essential tools, irrigation, delivery vehicles, and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rent, and marketing and distribution expenses.

2:30-4:30 **Tour of Robin Hollow Farm,** Mike and Polly Hutchison
Topics covered: fall greenhouse and tunnel production, major improvements (USDA and EQIP funding), cover crops and soil fertility, growing systems.

Growers' Business School

Association of Specialty
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25 Years - Four Celebrations

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Erin Windham • Roxanne Boisse • David and Jill Russell • Becky Devlin
Steve and Gretel Adams • Joe Schmitt • Mike and Polly Hutchison
Jim Kelly • Bob Wollam • Ken Cochran • Kent Miles

FARM TOURS • CLASSES • DEMONSTRATIONS • SOCIAL EVENTS

"From Seed to Sale"
October 7-8
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